

LAS PRIMICIAS

--BY--

VICENTE J. BERNAL

A. E. Allen '16

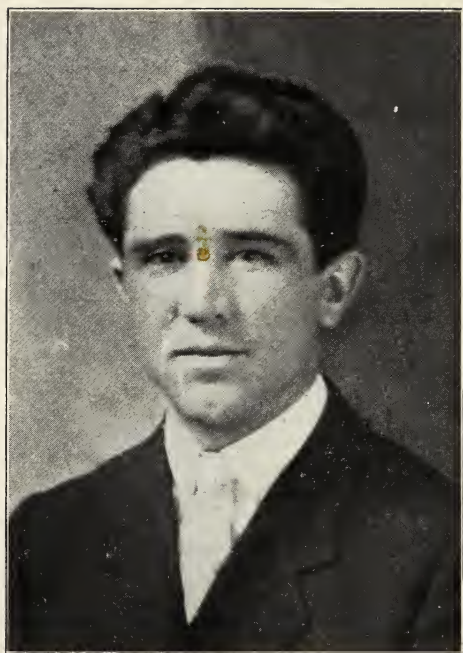
May '79 -16

In remembrance
of my classmate.



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To Dubuque College and Seminary,
which has taught so many of strange
tongue the syllables of liberty and
brotherhood, guiding their footsteps to
higher planes of usefulness, the edit-
ors dedicate this book.

LAS PRIMICIAS

—BY—

VICENTE J. BERNAL

—EDITED BY—

LUIS E. BERNAL
AND
ROBERT N. McLEAN



TELEGRAPH-HERALD
DUBUQUE, IOWA

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Preface

“Las Primicias”—so the lines which follow are offered, and so we would have them received. They are just the “first fruits” of one who was only making ready for the toil, when God called him to a bigger field and a greater harvest. The work itself is like the “Prelude” here offered; and both are like the fragment of a statue which some digger finds on the site of an ancient temple. We look at the fragment, and long for the part that is missing. Perhaps we shall find it some day, and piece out the statue, when God lets us continue our search among the treasures of eternity.

Those of us who taught in the classroom, will always remember Vicente Bernal, because of his ability to see truth, and apply truth to life. He was a man of a “double portion.” He not only saw the light, but he heard the voice of Him who spake. No class of which he was a member, could find literature simply a bundle of grammar and rhetoric. For him it was full of life—vibrant with meaning, and he insisted upon sharing the treasures it brought him. All the more welcome were his offerings, because they were given in a spirit of genial humor and friendliness, and a deep spirit of humility.

To us to whom the preparation of this volume has been entrusted, the greatest regret has been the fact that the Spanish poems are not meaningful to English readers. Vicente Bernal was a child of the hills and plains of New Mexico; and when we are most deeply stirred, we speak the language of our birth. The artificiality of an acquired tongue can never

really measure the deep things of the soul. These poems might be translated; but the best translations are really only fresh efforts, inspired by the original. The flower, when analyzed, ceases to be a flower. And so this little book can come with only a tithe of its meaning to him who cannot follow the liquid syllables which once graced the lips of Cervantes and Calderón.

Just as the little collection was found, written in note books, and upon odd-sized pieces of paper, so we offer it. Scant effort has been made to correct, none to revise. He had learned from his grandfather,

*"For God hath said that we shall work as if
Forever we should live."*

And so the papers are presented just as we found them when God also said to him, "Well done, my child, we'll rest."

ROBERT N. McLEAN.

Introduction

Life is mystery. Whence we come and whither we go alike defy curious inquiries. But when Death smites down youth, carefully prepared through many years for noble service in the gospel of Jesus Christ, the mystery of mysteries is faced. Love cries out for light. Is the only answer a cry? Does no response come back from the land that is far away? The question and the answer are found in the life of Vicente J. Bernal.

Too little are we acquainted with our own citizenship. Before the Mayflower entered Plymouth harbor or Jamestown had been settled, the sturdy Spanish penetrated the western wilds and laid the foundation of great states. Of this splendid stock Vicente was born, in Costilla, Taos County, New Mexico, on December 16, 1888. His boyhood days were happy, though spent in labor beyond his years. His parents' home was in San Pablo, Colorado, but he spent only three years of his life with them, being taken at that early age to be with grand-parents in Costilla, which must be reckoned as his home.

He early learned the meaning of toil. At eight years of age he was taken by his uncles to the sheep ranches in the mountains where, during the month of May, he could be of great help in the care of the lambs; and this he did for seven or eight years. In this free life in the open country he was learning the qualities of self-control and independence. As he was alone with his grandparents many things fell to his charge. The care of the horses was given to him at an early age, and before he was twelve the planning

of the work and the management of the farm became his charge. In every place he showed his efficiency and practical wisdom.

But the boy gave evidence of aptitude for other things. He obtained the rudiments of education in a little Presbyterian mission school in the town of Costilla. How important these little schools are for that country eternity only can tell. That Vicente was a bright and interesting pupil, goes without saying. His whole life witnesses to that, and he had a way of gathering knowledge from those with whom he was associated. His grandfather's memory went to the days antedating the annexation, and it was his constant delight to listen to his grandfather's stories of that stirring period. He made investigation of the foundations of his country from every available source; seeking information from the old settlers whom he would meet, as well as from his grandfather. In this way he had material, both of fact and of incident, to make a most interesting history, which he hoped some day to be able to write.

In his association with men, the boy showed a ready wit, which made him an acceptable companion, and his jokes often furnished entertainment for the neighbors. During this period, also, he began to make verses on many different subjects, but always with a humorous vein. Indeed, humor was one of his chief intellectual qualities and enabled him always to keep a cheerful outlook. These verses he did not preserve in writing, but they gave an indication of the way the boy's mind was working.

At length, in 1907, opportunity came for advanced education, when he was able to enter the Menaul School at Albuquerque, New Mexico. In this splendid mission school he received not only a start in classical education, but, likewise, a profound relig-

ious impression. It was here that he experienced a radical change of life and united with the Presbyterian Church. This happened the very year that he entered the school. As a boy he had often expressed a desire to be a preacher, and then, when he would hear a good lawyer, he would change his mind and wish to become a lawyer. But now when Jesus became the Master of his life he had no aim but to serve Him in the ministry. With this fixed purpose he entered Dubuque Academy in the fall of 1910, and would have graduated from Dubuque College with the Class of 1916.

During his years in Dubuque he made a deep impression upon the student-body, both by his scholarly abilities and by his noble Christian character. Mathematics had always been of great interest to him, but now he began to study with enthusiasm the literatures of both the English and the Spanish languages. He was particularly devoted to poetry, for his mind, as we have seen, early developed the poetical power. Hence the English and American poets became his familiar companions and spoke to him as to a kindred spirit. His gift was finely literary. He had a remarkable command of the English language, as well as of the Spanish. His essays and orations were of superior quality, ranking among the very best produced in the College. In every line of study he was diligent and conscientious, getting the best possible results from each subject. He was withal the soul of honor. The work he rendered was his own work. He frequently said he would rather fail, than win by wrong methods. Even when opportunity was given to profit from the prompting of another, he preferred to miss the question rather than to use the proffered help. His whole life was a consistent noble example of the transforming power of Christ.

He must needs earn the money to pay his way through college, and so his vacation time was spent in such work as he could find. He was employed now in the factory, and then at the hospital, and again on the farm; and in all these ways he proved his patience, his perseverance and his efficiency. His spare time he devoted to literature, and especially to Spanish rhetoric. And so his vacation enriched both his pocket-book and his mind.

He was recognized as a leader among the students. Twice he served as president of the literary society to which he belonged; he served the Y. M. C. A. for two terms as treasurer, and he was elected editor-in-chief by his class. Whatever office he held, he did the work of the office well.

At last he was smitten with a fatal disease. A few days of intense suffering were succeeded by a day of unconsciousness, from which he awoke in heaven. The end came April 28, 1915. It was hard to realize that all the promise of this gifted life had been suddenly destroyed; that all the plans which he had made for mission work among his people had been frustrated. The heart cried out at what seemed a tremendous sacrifice. "Why has God done this?" But the answer to the cry has come likewise in this sketch. Our Vicente, though he is dead, still speaks. His sweet, happy Christian life is his best gift to the world. That treasure will be ours forever. And as we gather up the lessons he has taught us and the good he has inspired in us, we must confess that Vicente Bernal has not lived in vain.

W. O. RUSTON.

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*PRELUDE

Fair seedtime had my soul in early youth,
But arid wastes ne'er bring to life the seed
That's sown; the dew from heaven has to descend
For plants to grow, to bloom in time and yield
Their fruit in season due. So 'tis with me:
My childhood, spent in nature's bosom, taught
By beauty and by fear, by flower and thorn
Reflects but dimly, beauties such, or gloom
That chilled my fiery heart; and faintly sings
My soul the tunes it learned from granite harps
And crystal lyres, that streamlets played while on
Their way to praise and laud their King, the sea.

When birds arrived from southern climes, and filled
The air with mellow notes, and trees began
To wake from winter's sleep, and streams with shrieks
And roars rushed forth and broke their icy chains,
We knew 'twas spring. Then out we went to till
The land, and step by step behind the plow
I trod; and one by one I dropped the corn
Within the broken sod. But when at rest,
My grandpa, filling well his pipe would say:
"Well done, my child! we'll rest, and then keep on,
For God has said that we shall work as if
Forever we should live, and by our toil

Then came the days when home—
Though less than ten I was—I had
To leave to tend the fold. Oh! how I loved
The lambs. When'er of frolic full they were,
A lamb I would become, and play with them!

*The "Prelude" is but a fragment of a poem which was never finished. In the entire poem, the author had planned to work out his own philosophy, giving expression to the most personal things in his own life. He tried to work as if he would live forever; but before he could finish, the great Father had said, "Well done, my child, we'll rest."

SONG TO DUBUQUE GERMAN COLLEGE.

(November 22, 1914)

Dubuque! How glorious is thy fame
In countries weak and strong.
To us, thy children true
How sacred thy majestic name.
With gratitude our voices ring
And swell like billows on the sea,
Hail! Alma Mater, D. G. C.!
To thee thy grateful children sing.

Dubuque, within thy stalwart wall
The nations meet as one
As brothers seek the light
And truth, and thou dost guide them all.
The varied accents rise in praise
As tempest on the mighty sea.
Hail! Alma Mater, D. G. C.!
Thou guide and light of every race!

*THE DICTUM OF AN OFFENDED TRAMP

(1915)

When my dust hath found its own
In some near or distant vale,
And thy heart is light and gay
With the showers and flowers of May,
Do not cross the dismal vale,
Where my dust hath found its own.

When my breath hath found its own
In some near or distant shore,
And thy blood is cold and slow
With December's stifling snow,
Seek the weird and haunted shore
Where my breath hath found its own.

THE WANDERER'S PLAINT

Should thy name be writ with fire
In the forests of the west,
Long before thy limbs should tire,
And thy meeting with the blest,
Would the shrubs with envy grow
And erase thy rhythmic name,
That the hunters, seeking game,
Might thy name, nor see, nor know.

Should thy worth be writ with steel,
On Wyoming's towering cliffs,
With a tremor and a peal,
Inward fire would rend the cliffs;
And the story of thy worth
Floods of lava would enfold
And thy story die untold
And thy virtues, at their birth.

But a heart that wounded, throbs
And is slowly growing faint,
That in silence, bleeds and sobs
Brings to thine, its anguished plaint.
And the winds that catch the strain
Shall rehearse it to the main
And thy name renown attain,
Though my pleading be in vain.

SONG TO D. G. C.

Awake the dormant voice and sing
Till air is rent, and heavens ring
And echo peals from mount to sea—
Hail! Alma Mater, D. G. C.!

With accent varied swells our song
To thee, thou noble, true and strong;
Thy fame rolls on o'er land and sea,
Hail! Alma Mater, D. G. C.!

Thy brow is crowned with heavenly light,
And truth is resting on thy right;
The nations look, and sigh to thee;
Hail! Alma Mater, D. G. C.!

Forever live, thou nations' guide;
'Cross arid wastes, or swelling tide,
Our prayers to God shall rise for thee,
Hail! Alma Mater, D. G. C.!

"BONITA"

(Upon receiving a postal upon his birthday, bearing the picture of a house, and the word "Bonita.")

A double cottage far away,
Wrapped in skies of deepest hue;
A lake of orange and of blue,
Guards that cottage far away—
Bonita!

Here the wavy, four-leafed clover,
There the lilies white and pure;
But no beauty can immure
Your twin cottage from a rover—
Bonita!

*“X”

This life, my life, which little counts
Is “X” in years and months and days;
And “Y” for years I’ve lived accounts,
While “Z” in future ever stays.

So when Memoria, working finds,
That “Y” amounts to twenty years,
And then if “Z” she almost finds,
I feel I have but few more years.

But still she puzzles to find “X”,
Transposes—how I hold my breath;
For being found, ’twill surely vex
My soul, for after “X” comes death.

*Written after a difficult day in algebra, when some difficult problems were discussed.

*THE DISHWASHER

(1913)

Round and round the plates did go,
The pan was full to overflow;
The washer grinned and said, “Look out!”—
And grabbed the plates and threw them out.

The washer gazed in angry mood,
The wipers three, in silence stood.
At last they cried, “A greasy plate!”
The washer heard, but said, “Too late!”

“My pan I’ve dried, I’ll wash no more!
For some one said, in days of yore,
That greasy plates belong to Greece,
Where Plato taught and lived at ease.”

*The author was the “dishwasher.” It was his custom to cry “Look out!” when removing a pile of plates to the rinsing pan.

RUBAYAT

(1915)

Awake! for Johnson, in his robe of night,
Has pulled the rope that puts our dreams to flight.
And lo! the waiters in their beds are caught,
And up they leap, full scared, in sorry plight.

Before the lips the cup of coffee tried,
Methought a voice within the kitchen cried:
"When all the tables are prepared within
Why nod the drowsy waiters so, outside?"

Ah, eat bologna, drink the dairy wine,
And do not spare the richness of the swine;
To-day is ours. To-morrow—ah! who knows
If we shall be the keepers of the swine?

Come buy a suit that's fitted for the spring,
Your winter-garments to the basement fling,
The college bird has but a little way
To flutter. Summer come, must cease to sing.

Some pose as tailors. Ah! can't make it go;
Some soling shoes, make arms and purses grow;
Some student barbers make their friends to growl:
"Ah, take the cash, and let the shaving go!"

TO BURNS

Scotland's music ne'er was heard
So clear and sweet, so sweet and clear,
Till Robert Burns with magic harp
Her ditties gave to human ear.

Did Scotia frown, or weep, or smile
When on thy harp, with wizard art
And flying fingers, thou didst play
The love and passions of her heart?

Thy plow upturned melodic verse.
Thy footprint lent melodious rhyme;
The "deil" himself gave thee a tune;
And "Let us pray" shall live through time.

On golden harps, in days of yore,
Were hymned the doing of a king;
But thou didst tune a lyre unseen
And knewest well her every string.

No minstrel, bard, or trovador
Half so well as thou could sing;
And when my love, a lay desires,
Thy burning poesies, I shall sing.

THE THIEF

O maid! a thief I'm called by you,
But tell me what I've stolen, please;
I know I'm innocent of theft.
That day I stood upon your left
Your rosy cheek, with elfish ease,
Stole from my lips the sweetest kiss—
O maid! I stole it not from thee.

COME WITH ME

Come with me, my Western Eyes,
Beneath the cliff, beside the stream
We'll sit and sing, we'll sit and woo.
O'er head we'll hear the moans and cries
Of wind and trees—but sweetest dream
They'll lend to us, the lovers true!

Come with me, my Western Eyes,
Beneath the cliff, where willows sigh
And tulips wild, so sweetly smile.
We'll tune our lyres, and sing adieu
To pain and care—those passers-by—
And count the ages but a while.

Come with me, my Western Eyes,
Beneath the cliff, we'll sit and sing;
And lilies decked in robes of dew,
When notes of ours shall fill the air,
Will to your lips the nectar bring,
That you may love, as I love you!

A STRANGER TO ALL I CHERISH

A stranger to all I cherish,
In darkness while the sun is high;
And withered before full-blown,
Wrecked before leaving the shore.
My hopes in their budding perish,
However propitious the sky.
The winds in the forest moan
A dirge of the nevermore;
But fancy, most foolish and blind,
With shadows of beauty doth play,
And brings to the courts of the mind,
The fairy that shuns me by day.

TO MY ALMA MATER

(1913)

O, D. G. C., tho few thy years,
This globe of ours is full of thee,
And from our land and land of seers
In flowing streams praise comes to thee.

Within thy walls the world thou hast,
May it molded be with power divine!
In heaven and earth a place thou hast,
And in this grateful heart of mine.

CHORUS

O, D. G. S. and D. G. C.,
My happy home and sacred dreams,
Thy light shines forth o'er land and sea
For love's the power within thy beams.

O TELL ME

(October, 1913)

Tell me, O tell me,
Sweet maiden of flowing black hair
The secret thy bosom conceals,
The secret thine eyes ne'er reveals,
O tell me,
Sweet maiden of flowing black hair.
Tell me, O tell me,
If I am the owner, the heir,
Of treasures now hid in thy breast,
For I cannot sleep—cannot rest;
O tell me,
Sweet maiden of flowing black hair!

TO TENNYSON

Oh, poet of love, who taught thee to sing?
Thy voice is a voice of sweetness and gall;
Thy tunes are the melodies straight from the soul;
Oh, poet of love, who taught thee to sing?

Thy hymns are as balmy as blossoming spring
Ethereally singing to far-distant fall;
Thy tongue is the tongue of a prophetic soul;
Oh, poet of love, who taught thee to sing?

Magician of melody, lead me the way;
I'll follow, I'll follow, though rugged it seem,
O'er mountain, o'er valley, I'll follow thy ray;
E'ut ere I awake from my elysian dream,
And thou are heard at the feet of thy King,
Pray tell me, pray tell me, who taught thee to sing?

TO MISS SELF AND JIMMY

(December, 1914)

The nightengale's melodious strain
I heard in nights of deepest gloom;
And through my spirit passed a train
Of sighs, unwelcomed and unknown.

The meadowlark, with trembling breast,
The lay of June rehearsed to me;
And there arose from east and west
The mists of doubt, regret, and fear.

Two birds I spied on a verdant hill;
Their heads were near, their breasts more near;
I heard no warbling, heard no thrill,
But was inflamed with God's own love.

A TEACHER

(April 1915)

A youngster went to college,
Resolved to be a preacher,
But when he had some knowledge
He thot, "I'll be a teacher."

But yet, you see, 'twas early
For such a great decision
His hair was not half curly,
How could he know his mission?

At once he wrote to mother,
In terms as sweet as honey,
And in some way or other
He begged her for some money.

He talked of Willy Wiles,
The dandy of the college,
And mentioned all the styles
Required for solid knowledge.

His mother, greatly pleased,
Enclosed some "Freshmen-backs."
And thot, "He'll be appeased
And buy all things he lacks."

But years brought greater needs
And greater needs more money,
Till mother lived on weeds,
While he was saying: "Honey."

Four years did laugh for him
And now has his profession.
And thousands follow him,
Nor stops the great procession.

TO MY SON, ON HIS TWENTY-FIRST
BIRTHDAY

(March 9, 1915)

("My Son" was the name given to a classmate, J. A. Howard).

Oh, may you live in paradise,
And by the angel of the Lord
Be never driven out to vice
Of gloom, now by your powers abhorred.

And when your pen sweeps through the page,
May every word exhale your joys,
That children of a future age,
May read, and say, "Oh blessed joys";

May read of love that never ends,
Of Eden's tunes, by mated souls,
That love itself, in secret blends
For such, shall strengthen famished souls.

And may no rising generation
Be cursed by what my pen portrays,
Nor hear my bitter lamentation,
And know that cherished love betrays.

Wishing that you may experience the 21sts of your affections, and that your life may be full and your noblest aspirations reached. If I've missed the mark, remember we are of different personalities and see life, perhaps, from different points of view.

YOUR MALCONTENT FATHER.

TO———

Turn not your eyes from me,
Those eyes of lovely brown,
For I shall droop of pain and grief;
In them from pain I find relief,
And all of heaven in them I see—
They are the stars and sun to me.
O, ———!

Turn not your eyes from me,
Those eyes of lovely brown!

TO A DOVE
(December, 1914)

O love-sick dove,
That wand'rest lone,
I, I, alone
With thee will rove.

Coo not in vain
By silent stream;
For crystal dream
Oft breaks in twain.

I'll sing for thee
The plain and hill,
The spring and rill,
The vine and tree.

I'll sing the flowers
And rustling corn,
The dewy morn,
And Phoebus power.

I'll sing the snow
The storms and clouds
And night that shrouds
All things below.

Could I but play
On Orphean lyre,
As lightning's fire
Would be my lay.

Its flashing gleam
Would fly to thee
And steal for me
A blissful dream.

But such a lyre
Needs bardic touch
And ditty such
Poetic fire.

TO———

My days—what have they been?
Am I alive, or am I dead?
Am I a slave in bonds, or free?

Since I received the breath of life
And left my mother's womb,
A curse was planted in my head,
Which grows and branches as a tree—
And yields its fruitage in my life—
I near me to the tomb.

O'er craggy hills my path hath led
And sore and bleeding are my feet;
My star is veiled with clouds
Of black indiff'rence; hope hath fled
To the unknown—most wild and fleet.
My all, I count, two shrouds.

But why should I desire to scan
More thorny hills, if life's a breath
Which seeks an ampler sphere!
A flickering flame, the life of man
Extinguished by the breath of death,
Which lurks forever near.

But wilt thou listen to my plea,
For I am sick and dying, love!
My heart is in thy breast:
My love! O wilt thou set it free,
That it may coo as mateless dove,
And seek in death its rest!

O let me kiss thy brow and locks,
And draw thee to my side, my life;
Then shall I seek the blast
In deserts wild; amidst the rocks
With reptiles, share my weary life,
Till I have groaned my last.

*TO A NARCISSUS

Narcissus, oh how blest thou must have been,
For thou was called to deck a virgin's waist.
How great the envy of thy zealous kin,
When from her ruby lips thou hadst a taste;
When in her eyes—two fountains blue and chaste—
As ne'er thy sire did see nor thou hadst seen—
Thy form thou didst behold, and feigning haste,
To fall in love with thy reflected mien,
As all thy tribe has done, a tear didst drink
Which gives thee perfume in thy drooping hour
And present sorrows to past joys doth link.
Ah, sere and withered is the vapory flower
That drank a tear; but to the azure sky
Its essence gave, and that shall never die.

*Written after being given a Narcissus by one of the lady students. His great appreciation could not adequately be expressed to the giver, as he always thought himself unequal to those of the opposite sex.

SONG FOR SOPHOMORE CLASS

O sophomore, of forehead broad,
Your path is steep and tedious, too,
But thine's the path, and thine's the road
That leads to dales with skies of blue.
Beyond these hills and deserts wide
You'll cross, to reach the peaceful shore,
Great waters, deep, that terrors hide;
But bravely swim, O sophomore!

CHORUS

O, sophomore! O, sophomore!
We sing thy praise for evermore,
From mountain height to ocean shore
O, sophomore! O, sophomore!

TO YOURSELF

(Xmas, 1914)

If your friends have proven true,
And to keep them you desire,
Let them have a thing or two
Of the trifles they admire;
But yourself, keep to yourself.

If your friends are like the winds
That from all directions blow,
Give them what you would to fiends;
Let them come and let them go;
But yourself, keep for yourself.

If the tried should prove untrue,
And profane your sacred trust,
Let them go, and seek some new;
But to these the trifles trust,
And yourself, keep for yourself.

THE ROSE AND THE THORN

The ruddiest rose oft hides a thorn,
Unseen by all but felt by some;
I plucked a rose one sunny morn—
The rose soon drooped, but left the thorn.

The purest breasts a secret hide,
Unknown by all, but felt by some;
My love, I sent in one to bide,
And there it dwells by treason's side.

Its prickly thorns the cactus shows,
And dry as rock appears to be;
But though on burning sands it grows,
The richest sap within it flows.

TOUCH IT NOT

Art thou a stranger here? O, touch it not!
For it's the spirit of the one who's gone.
Art thou a friend of mine? O, touch it not!
For it's the carcass of your friend, a bone
That will to dust return. O, touch it not!
If enemy thou art, for it will pierce
Your heart with darts of all that's mean and fierce.
If my brother thou shouldst be, touch it not!
But leave it where it is till I return.
Then with sorrow's fire I'll make it burn,
And drink the flame, that I may burn the more
And be consumed. But if my dreams, my joy,
My life, my sorrows, pains, regrets, my love
Should wander here—be I so far or near—
O, give a sigh for me,—the wretch who wore
A villain's mask, a treacherous look, the joy
Of none, the hated brier, the happless weed—
And say: "Poor wretch, I wish him nothing more
Nor less than death; that he may not appear
When I am joying with my friends. "But heed,
My cruel love, to this: "O, touch it not!"

IMAGINATION'S PLAINT

O friends, aërial friends!
That lend me wing to fly through space of time;
Through fields of famine, misery, hate and pride;
Through realms of beauty, love and peace untold.
How long, my truest friends,
Shall I behold—while on your wings sublime—
Such scenes; and read the tales that ages hide,
And lack the words to tell what ne'er was told?

I KNOW NOT WHY

To Miss————

I've heard a tune from vocal strings
Which thrills the fiber of my soul—
In sweetness it surpasses all—
But there's a hidden, mystic note
Of grief, which to its sweetness clings.

I've heard the flute's most piteous cry,
The harp and organ, when they rue,
The idyls of the shepherd's true;
And none but thine—thy music note,
Has thrilled my soul—I know not why.

I've heard the sister of the storms
Ethereal wrongs rue and bewail,
And on her misty, flying veil,
I've read the story of my years
As writ by three beatific forms.

Oh! I've admired the sovereign sky,
The evening star, the virgin moon;
But now I've found a calm lagoon,
Which holds the skies, and sorrow's tears.
This I adore,—I know not why.

PITY

I love to hear the warbling of the birds
When they are free from cage or snare,
And swing on boughs, or try the air;
But grieves my heart to hear the plaintive notes
Of birds with pinion, yet untried,
Imprisoned by a woman's pride.

MY SOUL

At the flashing of the sun,
On a June's ambrosial morning,
Smiles my soul, and psychic dances
In the rays of golden light,
In their pulses her delight,
For she's kissed by virgin fancies;
But returns in garbs of mourning
From the glories of the sun.

When the sun's propitious gleams
Fly as shafts of healing power
O'er the languid, drooping fields,
And they quiver, quiver, quiver,
In the bosom of a river.
Such his course submissive yields
And is gathered on a flower
As the tears of dying dreams.

MERRY XMAS TO MOTHER

No gold nor flowers to give, have I,
To her whose smiles from day to day
And counsel sweet, my soul inspire,
To seek what's best—the narrow way,—
And leave the streets of mean desire.
Receive from me a long-drawn sigh,
Which is the tale of what would be
Were I not I, nor yet he, who
Thinks not, nor feels just as I do,
When Mother dear doth smile on me.
May richer blessings rest on thee,
From Him who blessed all Galilee!

ELVIRA BY THE STREAM

(April 1st, 1915)

There's a valley in the mountains—
Once her Eden, ah! so fair,—
Pure and limpid are the mountains,
Vivifying is the air;
And the warbling, sweet and rare,
Of the birds that tinge her sky
As from grove to grove they fly.

Lofty peaks of souls volcanic
Guard that valley from the plain.
There they stand, serene, titanic,
Keeping watch o'er their domain;
None does waver nor complain,
None grows weary, nor dismay,
Tho their heads are hoary gray.

Liquid pearls on flowers sheen,
When the morning clears the sky;
And kind zephyr, light, unseen,
Sings his mellow lullaby,
And the clouds of perfume fly
To caress their guardians true,
As they smile from depths of blue.

Of the roses sang Porfiro;
Of the lilies sang Elvira;—
He is not a fancy's hero
Nor is she a wild chimera.
No! for this rejoicing era
Saw them prattling by the streams
And has kissed their psychic dreams.

She is roaming with the deer
That reflect her tender looks,
But her bosom finds no cheer
While she's playing with the brooks,
While she's bathing in the brooks.
For her soul is ever yearning
For Porfiro's sweet returning.

YE WHO ARE SELFISH

Lower your neighbors, praise yourselves,
Ye who're selfish to the core!
Laugh at him who, day by day,
Tries to brighten some one's way.
Throw his flowers near by the door;
Throw them on some dusty shelves.

Set your own where all may see,
Blow a trumpet! place them high!
Say to all: those flowers are odd,
Growing by the miry road,
Ours are beautiful, you see,
And the price so very high.

Nature's beauty is given to all;
Yellow flowers as well as white
Share her sunshine and her mists.
Ye who're selfish, praise your gifts!
Laugh at him who gives his mite;
With his mite, his heart and all.

CHRISTMAS IN LUPENVILLE

The children of Lupenville were in great excitement, shouting and throwing snow-balls at Joe Riller as he drove to the school-house with the Christmas tree.

"That's the boy!" said Mr. Crooger, the proprietor of the village grocery store. "Let's set it up right away, that the women may hang up the toys for the children before supper." "Here comes the carpenter! Good for him! He's the man every time!" The tree was dragged into the school-room, and in a short while every citizen of Lupenville was inside the school house.

"Every 'kid' is to get something to-night from that tree," said Mr. Porky, the good-natured butcher, to the children, who by this time had swarmed near the door, eager to measure the holding capacity of their Christmas-tree. Peter Henwen was among them, and his little heart warmed up, when he heard that every "kid" was to have something from the tree.

He went to his gloomy home and told his mother that he was to have Christmas presents like the other boys. "Ah, my child, nobody cares for you and your mamma. Only I care for you, and love you. Your mama is the only one who gives anything to Peter, my sweet, ragged Peter. Stay with mamma. It's too cold for you to go to the school-house at night. Next year I will buy you a Christmas present." "Oh, mamma, its not cold outside. It's colder in here than when I'm playing with the boys; and I was with them when Mr. Porky said that every kid was to get something pretty from the tree. Let me go, mama!" begged Peter.

"Well, come then, let us eat supper—this roasted potato and few slices of bread is all we have—and say your prayers with mama, then you may go."

After their scanty meal and their petitions to heaven, Peter sped thru the darkness to the school-house. Oh, the joy when he approached the gayly lighted house! Then as he got near the door, the words of his dear mother ran thru his mind, but disappeared, as he heard Joe Riller, the Santa Claus, say: "This cap belongs to Master Josiah Healey." Peter Henwen walked in, and found a standing place near the door, for the benches were all occupied and many of the youngsters were on their feet.

The Santa Claus was entertaining the villagers with his blunt humor and picking presents for every child. The last thing left on the tree was a pair of mittens. Santa plucked them and said: "Here is the last present. This is for Honorable Peter He-e - - . Peter Henwen's blood boiled in his veins. His face seemed to be onfire. At last Santa Claus could make out the name and pronounced it "Peter Hensen!" Poor Peter Henwen! The last present had been handed out, and he had nothing. His tears scalded his cheeks, as they rolled down one after the other. How well his mother knew no one cared for him. He was squeezing towards the door, when Mr. Pickle the school-master stood up and began to squeak out a speech about Education and Religion, which he ended thus: "Education and religion flourish today in Lupenville as in no other city in the universe; Lupenville is the Athens and the Jerusalem of the West."

While the applause was at its highest, Peter rushed from the miserable schoolhouse, into the howling storm. He felt the snow being driven thru him, as he ran thru the village. The snow seemed to cut his face. He reached the grocery-store; paused a few seconds, then made for the lonely cottage outside the village, where his mother was waiting for him. His

limbs were stiffening, and he cried within himself; "Oh, mamma! Dear mamma, I'm freezing!"

His mamma met him, took him in her arms and carried him into the cottage, which—as Peter saw—was transferred into a beautiful home. There was a Christmas-tree, and his mother had many beautiful things for him. The Santa Claus was young and beautiful, dressed in white. He said to Peter: "Put on the warm suit, this fur cap, and wear the pretty mittens and shoes, then I'll give you the toys that are on the tree. Now you and your mamma shall be happy. Peter cried for joy, and said to the Santa Claus: "If there is some other poor boy, take part of my Christmas presents to him."

Early the next day the village school-master found a lifeless woman with a child in her arms, reclining on the trunk of a solitary cypress tree. Upon closer examination he discovered that the boy in the woman's embrace, whom he recognized as Peter, was also dead. All the applause of the night before vanished from his memory. The wan, haggard face of a poor ragged urchin, standing in the rear of the room, and who had left hurriedly before the entertainment was over, came rushing into his mind. He sighed and hurried away, as the tears trickled down his hollow cheeks.

HUMOROUS TALK

In order to appreciate the good and rich things of life as we ought, we must have those things that are ill and poor. So to-night, I have been requested to present the weeds, that you may more fully value the wheat. But I'll tell how the request was made and how the matter has developed to this very moment.

The program committee met me in the main hall and said to me, "Say, Bernal, won't you give a short talk Friday night, about Christmas, or something humorous or original?"

"Who else is in it?" I asked.

After they named those on the program, I found to my encouragement that another student also was to present his novel ideas, and I assented to their request.

That same day, while partaking of our supper, I heard the committee ask Mr. P., "Will you take the stand on Friday night, and share with the visitors the luscious fruits of your mind?" "Nothing doing," answered he. Here's where I was trapped, said I to myself, a double job for me.

On the following day, I made my appearance at the Woolworth Ten Cents Store, and after examining every department and having found nothing humorous or original, I asked a young lady, "Have you anything humorous or original in this store?" She hesitated a little, and then answered, "No, everything is up to date." I thought the New Ten Cents Store certainly must have lots of humorous things. I walked for half a block and went in. Before taking the trouble to make a thorough examination as in the former, I asked a young lady who works near the entrance, "Where is the department of humor and originality?" "Way to the other end," said she. I

went to the northeast corner of the store, and after trying to find the humor and seeing nothing but tops and rubber dolls, I asked, "Are the humorous and original articles all gone?" "No," said the girl, "here are some, this is the way to spin them. You can take one or two and some of these rubber dolls, too, for your kids." Of course that was a surprise to me and I left the store, asking myself whether or not I was crazy. I came to the college and walked into Schauer's room and asked him, "Did you find my reason in that coat you ironed for me yesterday?"

"You're crazy," said he, "something was in your pocket and melted; spoiled the whole coat. Get out of here, or I'll break your head!"

"You have no reason to break it," said I, and crash! the pieces of a baseball bat flew to every direction from my head, and seeing the enraged tailor take hold of a flat iron, I thought it prudent to leave him and hurry down town to consult the doctor about my lost reason.

On arriving at the corner of 8th and Main streets, I saw Mr. Socrates standing barefooted and hatless, taking notice, as it seemed, of the different styles of dresses displayed on the streets. I saluted him and asked, "What are you doing?"

"Oh, just enjoying myself," he said, "to see that of the multitude of things displayed nowadays I need but few."

"How is Mrs. Socrates and the boys, and what are they doing?"

"They are all right," answered Socrates. "Mrs. Xanthippe Socrates is doing her shopping this afternoon, and I believe she sent the boys to the movies."

"I lost my reason," said I, "I am going to the doctor right away."

"You don't need to, young man, let us see if we

can set it right." And he started to diagnose the case.

"What size was your reason?"

"I don't know."

"Where did you keep it before you lost it?"

"In the brain."

"Did you see it?"

"No."

"How do you know you had it in the brain?"

"Everybody is supposed to have it there."

"Have you any brain?"

"I think so."

"Coming back to the beginning, who told you that you had reason?"

"Nobody. But everybody is calling me crazy. That's why I think I have lost my reason."

"No, young fellow, he who has had nothing and loses everything he has, loses nothing. That's the case with you."

I was convinced with his philosophy, so took the car up to the college, and I just came to tell the program committee that I had been unable to find anything for the occasion.

THE WEDDING FEAST

The bridegroom and his parents occupied the second buggy in the procession that made for Gomorrah, from Sodom, the village where the bride, Estrella, lived. The musicians led the way on a new and spacious carriage. The relatives and close friends followed.

The maid's relatives were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the bridegroom; there was bustle and hustle in the spacious home of Estrella, which seemed

to radiate its spirit through the entire Gomorrah.

The main hall which was often used for family dances was arrayed in splendor, and had an inviting aspect. The rooms at the sides of the hall had been arrayed fittingly for the occasion. The banquet tables were crowned with wines, fruits, sweet-meats and aqua vitae.

The uncompromising ways of February made the procession travel faster than was customary on such occasions. And the awaited procession reached the bride's home earlier than what it was agreed upon—at half past three instead of four o'clock P. M.

The musicians marched into the hall. The Godfather and God-mother went in; the young couple next; parents followed; then the relatives and epicureans. After feasting came supper. After this the dance came with lively feet. The merriment increased, as the wine decreased, and all was merriment.

Many a youngster was sick at heart. Estrella, the fairest of Gomorrah, was to be wedded. Yet her beauty and winning ways seemed to make the wounded forget themselves and rejoice.

The night was dark. The wind was chilly and sang with a wierd voice.

Proudly sat Porfiro beside Estrella; her round face without smile but with an air of selfish pride. She, you could see, had shed some tears. Porfiro was wealthy, so was she. But she loved Bernardo, her poor neighbor. Porfiro loved himself.

A waltz was terminated, and everybody was taking his seat, when—mirabile dicto!—from the west door of the hall, without a noise, moved a figure shrouded in black, in the right hand holding a rose, in the left a viper. And the snake all the while endeavoring to sting the rose, but could not reach it. The whole house was hushed. Everybody looked at

the walking shroud. No one said a word or stirred. The ghost went into the banquet room, poured wine from the different bottles into a glass, and then shot it at the fire—for an open fire-place was in that room. And with a solemn gait left the room and disappeared in the dark. "Follow him! kill him!" cried Porfiro. But the night was dark and gloomy and nothing could be seen. "Do you know what it means?" he inquired of Estrella. She looked at him with moistened eyes, her coral lips trembled, her cheeks flushed, but spoke not a word.

* * * * *

The wedding-bells announced the nuptial ceremonies were to be performed. Before noon, Porfiro and Estrella were husband and wife, and the merriment continued. Yet all inside of the home, for the weather was inclement.

The day flew, night—dreary night—was over Gomorrah. However, the music was making the weary feet to dance, the wine making the afflicted breasts to flutter with joy.

* * * * *

In walked an uncouth figure with a trailing white garment. His face was covered, but through the cloth could be seen his eyes of fire, and also his mouth. A burning taper was in his hands. As the spectre neared the west end of the hall, Porfiro drew a revolver and shot. The fantom rushed out.

Estrella cried, "Bernardo!" and sank in eternal sleep.

Bernardo, the neighbor, died that night, although nobody knew him to be ill.

In February every year, people say, that the ghosts of Estrella and Bernardo visit the dancing hall of Estrella's home.

But, should you not believe, go and see.

TOAST AT THE COLLEGE GRADUATION

BANQUET, 1914

*"Time is the sand of life,
And when we waste a grain,
And wish to get it back,
We can but wish in vain."*

MR. TOASTMASTER AND FRIENDS:—

As I listen to the wit of the former speakers, I felt that I was smaller than Zacchaeus. Nevertheless, I believe the great truth found in these words of Emerson, "For every grain of wit, there is a grain of folly."

Perhaps most of you know something about the college convention, held in Tarrytown three days ago, where representatives of all the leading American and British colleges met to consider the problems of the students. At that convention, they came to the conclusion that a Sophomore could not be held responsible for his words after having tasted strawberry whip.

De Quincey, who stole my thoughts, said: "The time which *is* contracts into a mathematical point; and even that point perishes a thousand times before we can utter its birth." Now if you look at this sand clock—this is what is given to us when we are born—you'll see the sand of life; the sand in the upper tube is the future, that in the lower tube is the past, and we stand here in the middle weighing every grain that passeth (the present), and if we waste a grain and wish to get it back, we can but wish in vain.

Since the present is but a flying moment, we say:

"Our theme shall be of yesterday
Which to oblivion sweeps away
As days of old."

Yes, worthy Seniors, in the past you have been our

leaders, physically, intellectually and—some times—morally. We, the sophomores, desire you, our eldest brothers, the class of 1914, to remember that your prosperity and happiness is the joy of your families and friends, that your station is sacred to your people and your country, that your lives are holy to the world and to God.

VIEW FROM MY WINDOW WHEN FEELING GLOOMY.

I stand near my window, and looking out, see but monotonous hills; houses where misery and grief abide; trees that speak but of death, death, bitter death. The people who pass by wear the habilament of weariness, their walk is tired, they speak foolishly, and their faces are carved with a calamity. The fruit sellers shout with the voice of Cerberus, and their carriages rattle a head-crackling rattle. Wherever I cast my look I see nothing but grim calamity.

VIEW FROM MY WINDOW WHEN FEELING GAY

Looking from my window, I behold the scattered homes, and the rising and declining hills, speaking of prosperity and peace. The trees in their winter sleep, sway gently, and tell of the sweet hopes of blooming again. The passers-by walk lively and speak gleefully. The voice of the fruit sellers is musical, and the tones of the carriages are light and agreeable. Wherever I look I see the unsurpassing beauty of nature.

FITNESS FOR LIFE

Were I not confident that you give audience alike to the student who uses his one talent and to the one who uses his ten, far would it be from me to appear before you. For what I have to bring to you to-day are but stitches found on the paths of the makers of history; a bone from a carcass of the caravans that have perished in the sands of unpreparedness, and a shell from the shores of the turbulent river of progress, all of which—by some mysterious voice—seem to say, "Man's life is not counted in years but in achievements."

Is that different from what we believe? No! Then the uppermost ambition in our minds ought not to be to live the longest life, but the noblest.

How can we achieve the most in life? Is it by building air castles, or by erecting log cabins? Is it by dreaming of great things, or by a willingness to pay the price? Is it by making the shortest cut to a diploma, or rather by taking the standard course of our institutions of learning?

Milton, the sublime English poet, said: "I would rather come late into life provided I come fit." You may ask: "Did he practice what he preached?" Certainly he did. After he had finished his college and university work, he retired to the country for six years, where he devoted all his time to the study of European literature, science and music. That was his preparation. His work came afterwards, when he was hailed as the champion of the Commonwealth and the voice for Liberty at whose altar he heroically laid his sight as a sacrifice. Had he achieved nothing more in his life, he would be known as the ideal patriot; but England would lack a refulgent and glorious star in the sky of her literature.

On the contrary, let us consider Thomas Chatter-

ton, who at the age of eleven was writing poetry. He produced work that had no trace of being the fruit of an immature mind. At the age of seventeen, full of enthusiasm, he set out for London to establish himself in a literary career. A few darts from the critics brought him low, and in greatest discouragement he ended his days.

Now may we look for something in the forest kingdom that bears some relation to our discussion? Take for instance an elm of twenty years. Its trunk is thick and its branches are spread high in the air. Near by stands an oak of fifty years, yet not so large as the elm. The infuriated hurricane sweeps over the land, the elm is bereft of its branches, but the oak stands as before.

Take the ephemera if you will. It begins to develop at sun-rise, goes thru all its stages of life, and by sun-set is no more. On the other hand, consider man. He grows and develops until he is twenty-five years or more. Now and then we see one who, having walked over the seventy entire arches on the bridge of life, totters over the broken arches beyond the hundreth before he falls into the river of eternity.

If we derive anything from the illustrations brought for our consideration, it is this: that the longer it takes any object to develop, the sturdier it is.

However, you may say: Times have changed, we are in an age of specialization. Then specialize, but do not begin to specialize while in academy or college; for the best specialist is "he who knows something about everything, and everything about something."

Sacred history is full of accounts which prove that in order to accomplish something great in life, a great preparation is needed.

Epictetus said: "A ship should not ride on a sin-

gle anchor, nor life on a single hope." We must not trust in our boyish expectation; for what we may consider to be our life's career to-day may have vanished by to-morrow, and be as a dream that is past and remembered no more.

Let us picture to ourselves a battle between the American Colonists and the British. The Revolutionists have taken Bunker Hill; the Red Coats make a charge, they are repulsed. Again they rally and make an attack; they are repelled. Once more they rally; they marshal; they charge, and alas! the Colonists lack ammunition. They are routed, and wounded and bleeding they are driven from the heights by the English.

Bunker Hill is a portrayal of life. He who is well prepared easily becomes victor in life's fray. He is the Moses who leads the children of Israel out of servitude; the Joshua who crosses the Jordan and brings them into the Land of Promise. He is the Pericles of Greece and the Orator of Rome. He is the Cromwell of England and the Jefferson of America.

In every age and every clime, the men of thorough preparation have been the men of achievement.

Who is here so indolent, but will not dare to rise! Who is here so ambitious, but will not fit himself to achieve!

THE ORATOR

Full well do we understand the obstacles that arise when we are to address our fellow-students. Nor are we ignorant of the critical ear and the sometimes biased opinion that awaits the unfortunate who, by a stroke of the pen, is set on the platform to shout or to mumble his disconcerted ideas. Yet many a one has felt a duty, and not a few have delivered a stimulating message. Thus I stand before you, to fulfill a duty, and, if I may, to deliver my message.

Who is the orator? The man who, by the power of his language and force of his logic is able to persuade and convince his hearers; the man who, by the heartiness and pleasantness of his phrase, or the brilliancy and sonorousness of his speech, is capable of wielding, leading or driving his audience. If records are true, the orator was heard in anti-diluvian ages. So that we may say, "The orator was, since man was." It follows that in every race, yes, and in every tribe, as we trace the progress and advancement of the different peoples, we find the orator voicing the sentiments of his family, or the principles of his tribe or nation.

It has been said, "The pen is mightier than the sword!" To which we can rightly add, "But the orator is mightier than the pen." The sword has never been able to supplant the orator. Search the pages of history and you shall find, that when the greatest generals found themselves at a loss how to render submissive their mutinous troops; or, how to inspire with patriotism their apathetic soldiers, they had to place the sword in the scabbard, and rising with the majesty of the orators, they were able to pacify the rebellious spirits of their soldiers, just as Neptune calmed the angry waters, or else they were capable of instilling their own hopes and

ambitions into their languid and woe-be-gone followers.

Scipio Africanus, while conducting his campaigns in Spain, had to resort to the power of the orator in order to subdue his mutinous men. His eloquence and reasoning was his mighty weapon, and not his sword. Hannibal, the genius who inspired terror in the hearts of the Romans, and made the foundations of Rome to quake and groan; he, when his army appeared wasted as a host of skeletons, addressed them and, by his native eloquence made his famished hosts forget their weakness and dash themselves against the Roman spears.

Now may I ask who flooded Europe with the spirit of the crusader? Was it the Pope, the generals, the knights? No! It was the orators. They' by the storms of their oratory, tossed the frail barks of European fanaticism eastward, southward, until they drove them into the Mohammedan Maelstroms, from which, few, ay, few of them ever came out.

But I shall not linger in the foreign fields of oratory. For such orators as Robespierre, Mirabeau, Garibaldi, Kossuth, Bismarck, Burke, and Castelar, may find no response in the fibers of your hearts; and the cordage of your souls may not vibrate at the touch of these masters of oratory. Nevertheless we have to confess that whether in times when the dove of peace has been petted in every home, or when the streams have been crimson with the blood of fallen victims, the orator has been the axis around which prosperity or calamity has always rotated.

The press can never be a substitute for the orator. The written page is nothing but the dregs of the oration. The orator's personality, his voice and delivery are the strength, the stimulant and the aroma of his cup. Come to America, where the press is re-

vealing every secret and urging the advance to the Utopian Realms; here, where every crime is written with capital letters, and where the papers are more numerous than the sands of the Sahara; here, in the land of Webster, where he soared Condor-like, to the amazement of all. In our Republic, in this time of the pen, when Bryan is to speak, the multitudes swarm around him to hear. Why are they not satisfied with reading what he is advocating? Because the ink lacks the fire, and the written page does not convey the magnetism, radiance and sonority that the spoken word possesses when it leaves the lips of the orator. What press would have turned the tide of anti-federalism in England, when we were in civil strife? What arguments would have availed to convince the British, that the South was in error, and the North in the right? Yet Beecher accomplished all these. Not because they were eager to listen to him. No! On the contrary, they were ready to mob him if he persisted in speaking. But amid shouts and threatenings, Beecher stood undaunted, and with that potency and serenity which characterizes the orator, he unfolded his message, converting the antagonizing masses into sympathizers, if not supporters, of our country's cause.

On the other hand when our country was in its infancy and in danger of being strangled by its own mother; and when every hope of independence seemed to be fleeing from our shores, the orator, voicing the distress of the anguished infant, said, "Give me liberty or give me death!" There echoed and re-echoed from every patriot's heart, "Give me liberty or give me death!" Every mountain offered her children, every valley sent her youth, and every village gave her men for the sacred cause of freedom.

Yes, the orators have swayed the nations, as the blast sways the trees of the forests; they also have warmed the fields of public sentiment and made them to flourish, as the sun with its golden rays warms and makes the hills and valleys to flourish. But has the age of the orator passed? As long as men shall disagree with their fellow-men, so long shall the orator hold his predominant place. As long as there be different strata of opinion and principle to be proclaimed, so long shall the orator be a necessity. Oh what a future lies open, displaying untold wealth, undying fame, and ever-spreading, ever-living influence; all, all for the orator.

UNA CARTA

De un pastor de ovejas al Presidente de Los E. U.
Cristales, N. M., Mayo 29, 1913.

Señor Presidente:—

Yo soy José Atanasio Melón, republicano desde la suela de mis teguas hasta la punta de mis cabellos, y le escribo estas líneas, porque he oído decir que los Demócratas son enemigos de los borregueros y que van a quitarnos la tarifa para que no podamos vender la lana de nuestras ovejas; y que el valor de las zaleas caerá por completo.

Pues mire Vd. Señor Presidente, en lo que se va a meter; los pobres ganaderos no ganarán con sus ovejas ni para pagar a los pastores—aunque yo no los necesito porque yo apaciento las mias—además, tenemos que comprar sal y medicinas, pagar el impuesto, comprar burros, pagar renta por los campos, mantener nuestros perros, pagar a los esquiladores, ¿donde iremos a dar? Ah, Señor Presidente, considere que también nosotros somos hijos de este país; no no más los gobernadores y licenciados.

Yo estoy con mis ovejas en el valle Frío, donde nace el Río Escondido. La yerba está muy alta en los bosques y los corderitos están creciendo muy aprisa.

El día catorce de Junio empezaré a esquilar.

Ayer poco después del medio día, pescó el Fido un venadito y lo voy a crear de una cabra.

Dele mis saludos al Presidente Taft, y a Bryan.

Contésteme tan pronto como le sea posible, y dirija la carta a cuidado de mi compadre Ustacio.

Su Servidor,

—José Atanasio Melón.

HISTORIETA

Muy Señor Mío:—

Hoy me propongo contaros una historieta. Ocurrió que en una ciudad no la de Dubuque, un joven llamando Lafuerza, aunque muy débil, compró un violín. Este joven no sabía para qué eran los violines; pero la apariencia de tal instrumento le cautivó su mente y así fué que se hizo de él.

Lo relatado habiendo acontecido en una ciudad del este, cuando me vine para N. Mex. no supe más de Lafuerza. Muchos años han transcurrido. ¿Cinco? ¿Diez? ¿Diez años? ¡ah, si diez años! Y hoy ví ese nombre en un periódico de New York. Y en uno de sus artículos leí como sigue: “Lafuerza, quien se ha ganado la palma, como el mejor y más célebre violinista se halla en la ciudad.” ¡Miguel! ¿quiere Vd. creer que ése es el mismo joven que no sabía para que eran los violines? ¡Ha, lo que es el hombre!

Acabo de recibir el periódico y refiriéndose a Lafuerza dice así: Anuncióse que el gran artista Lafuerza (pues ya tú sabrás que en las ciudades todo se sabe por medio de los diarios) tocaría en el Auditorio Barcelona; compráronse asientos por diez y doce pesos, los más baratos por cinco, y no apareció el artista.

TRADUCCIÓN

"The Barefoot Boy"

19 de Febrero de 1915.

¡Dicha la tuya hombrecito!
¡Niño que vas descalcito!
Con mejillas color tostado,
Pantalón arremangado
Y silbando melodía;
Y tus labios cual la grana
En los cuales se desgrana
Dulce beso cada día
De las fresas de la loma;
Y en tu faz el sol mira
De tus ojos él se asoma,
¡Parabienes jovencito!
YKo también fuí descalcito.

¡Príncipe eres soberano!—
Cual un fiel republicano,
Deja al rico que pasee,
Y descalzo tú a su lado
Tienes más que lo que él cree
O millones le han comprado,—
Alegría en tu pechito:
Parabienes descalcito.

O placer de juventud;
Sueño y risa de salud,
Que desdeña a los doctores:
Comprensión de abejas y flores,
De los libros no adquirida;—
Vuelo de ave, y libre vida
De los dueños de pinares;
Como carga sin pesares,
La tortuga su prisión;
Como el topo y la marmota
Traman buena habitación;

Como sabe alimentar
Petirrojo a sus hijuelos,
Y oropéndola colgar
Suave nido de alta rama;
Donde el lirio vaporoso
De perfume se derrama;
Y el maní vive medroso;
Donde de uvas deliciosas
El racimo está invitando;
Cómo avispas laboriosas
Por el viento van zumbando,
Como afana el avispon,
Artesano y gran masón
Construyendo su morada.
Y así el niño que evadiendo
Los preceptos de la pluma,
Por natura enamorada
Grandes cosas va aprendiendo,
Mano en mano, van paseando,
Cara a cara conversando,
Cuerpo y alma de su gozo,
!Eres tú mi mozuelito!
Bendiciones, descalcito.

O de junio la alegría
Apiñando en breve día
Las bellezas de los años
Sin soñar de desengaños;
Cuando toda voz que oía,
Vida y matiz que veía
Para mí se desprendía:
Las abejas y las flores,
Alamedas, picaflores,
Eran la riqueza mía.
Y la ardía en travesura,
Y la tusa en su cordura

Mi deleite procuraban ;
Y las fresas maduraban
Sobre arbusto y sobre roca
Para el gusto de mi boca ;
Y de margen arenosa
Terso pozo, y los caídos
De nogal, y los vencidos
Arboles del huerto fueron
Mis riquezas y deleite.
Mi horizonte se agrandó
Mi riqueza se aumentó
Todo el mundo al derredor,
Todo el mundo en su esplendor ;
Parecióme un juguetito
Para un mozo descalcito.

ESPERA

Cuan tedioso es esperar
A lentísimos correos
Que ya no hacen ni trotar
Sus flaquísimos cameos.

Mas no pierdas la esperanza,
Que aquí van los *Documentos*
Y aunque es mucha la tardanza,
Son muy pocos los comentarios.

EL AÑO MUERE

(Diciembre 1914)

Doblen, doblen las campanas
Y no cesen de doblar;
Que ya está para expirar
De la vida un año más.

La natura está suspensa
Contemplando la agonía
Del anciano que porfía
Con el angel de la muerte.

Los alcores y los valles
En silencio están orando,
Y las fieras van ahullando
Por el año que fenece.

Con sus canas ha cubierto
De la tierra el ancha faz,
Y le dice: "Duerme en paz,
No despiertes, no me llores."

En el alba de mañana
Con presura llegará,
Quien un año regirá
El imperio de la vida.

Los aplausos á millones
Su llegada anunciarán,
Mas por siempre seguirán
Tras los dobles de tu muerte.

Monumento elevarásete
Del humano en la memoria
Con las piedras de la historia
Que tu genio te esculpió.

LAS HORMIGAS

Coloradas las hormigas
Que laboran siete meses,
Desde Abril hasta en Octubre,
Sin quejarse de fatigas;
Y afrontando los reveses
Hasta el día en que ya cubre
Densa nieve sus hogares.
Comen miel de la mejor.
El sudor de largo estío,
Y disfrutan de manjares
Que deleitan el sabor.
Y en sus casas donde el frío
Nunca puede penetrar
Duermen poco, y siempre anciosas
Ruegan, ruegan, sin cesar:
“Ven, buen sol, a calentar;
Que es morir estar ociosas,
Cual vivir el trabajar.”

LA VIDA

Viene al mundo la criatura
Con el llanto entre sus labios.
Llora en vano su ventura
Si se sienta con los sabios;
Y lamenta su desdicha
Si le cubre la ignorancia;
O solloza por la dicha
Que le roba la arrogancia.
Cual la brisa cariñosa—
Un instante, y luego es ida:—
Cual la voz, que quejumbrosa
Por el aire va perdida:
Que del este se desprende
Y al oeste va girando.
¿Y su vuelo quién comprende?
¿Y su curso, quién va guiando?
Esta vida es un suspiro,
Y el suspiro más profundo
Se divide en este mundo
Sin dejar de ser suspiro.
Y su transito es eterno,
Y engrandece en lo eternal.
¿Un suspiro es ser eterno,
Y engrandece en lo eternal?

QUEJA

¡ Oh, que falta de razón!
¡ No, pues no lo comprendió—
Si su helado corazón
Con terrenos me heredó,
Él, mi bien, mi bien, creó,
Consistir en oro frío;
Hoy lamento mi desvío,
Y de vicios soy el reo.
Hoy, Miguel, de un peón el hijo
Es el guía de esta villa—
Sorprendente maravilla;
Pues la nada lo bendijo,
Y á mi el ocio me maldijo.
Bien recuerdo sus desvelos
Días antes de partir
A la escuela; y ¡ oh que celos
Mi ambición pudo sentir!

LICENCIADOS

Licenciados hay cien mil
De semblante varonil
Y gradúos del barril;
Quienes no aman el mentir,
Como oíste tu decir,
Pero tienen que vivir.
Mas si fuera suficiente
El mentir para esa gente
Viviría alegremente
El ilustre, el ignorante,
El humilde, el arrogante,
Y sería mas pujante
La amistad que la discordia.
Mas temiendo perecer
No teniendo que comer,
Estos buenos licenciados
Que aborrecen á malvados
Y procuran siempre ver
Que haya paz, y mantener
La armonía en toda aldea,
Siguen pues, con su tarea
Entre viudas é inocentes.

O CAUTIVA EN JAULA DE ORO

O cautiva en jaula de oro,
De los campos favorita;
Sé que fuiste deslumbrada
Para ser aprisionada,
Y que tu alma está marchita,
Sin saber que yo te lloro.

O cautiva en jaula de oro,
Tu pechito enardecido,
(Rica fuente de canciones),
Siente el fuego de aflicciones
Siente el mal de un bien perdido:
Mas no siente que te adoro.

O cautiva en jaula de oro
Tu plumaje de colores
Ha perdido su belleza;
Tu pechito, sus amores:
Mas yo pierdo lo que adoro.

DIALOGO

ÉL

Soy hijo del dolor
Y hermano del sollozo,
Cautivo del amor
Y celda de mi gozo.

Perdí mi libertad
El día en que me viste
Jurándote lealtad
Que tú no comprendiste.

Jugaste con mi amor
Cual viento con las hojas;
Cegóme tu candor,
Y así de tí me arrojas.

Mendigo, vagaré
Por tierras extranjeras;
Cual diosa te veré,
Calmando mis quimeras.

Mis penas ahogaré
En mares de amargura,
Y en ellos buscaré
La perla que perdura.

ELLA

No llores tu aflicción
Ni alabes mis beldades
Que es juego de traición.
En ropas de verdades.

Mi pecho virginal
Se arrulla en la inocencia
Y lo han de despertar
Los lirios y su esencia.

Sería ruín traición
Y agravio contra el cielo,
Ceder mi corazón
Dejando mi alma en duelo.

ÉL

Oh si tu alma respondiera
De mi espíritu al acento,
Paraíso el mundo fuera
Y un Edén nuestro aposento.
Y las aves y las flores
Tu belleza alabarían
Y en mi lira vibrarían
Tus esencias, mis amores.
Mas en cambio se ha de oír
De mi pecho el gemir.

ELLA

¿En el mundo cuantos hay,
Sumergidos en el ay
Del infausto desengaño?
¿Y caeremos, tú y yo
En el seno del engaño?
Si tú me amas, y yo no,
¿Donde está ese bien deseado?
¿Tus ensueños é ideal?
Aunque nunca te he amado,
¡Amo pecho, tan leal!

CARTA

Una carta le escribí
Diez ó quince días há
De la cual se espantaría;
Pues tan poco que la ví
¿“Quince días, me dirá?”
Mas con uno sobraría.

Amistad de vez primera
Que la ví, deseé tener,
Pues me atrajo su semblante
Que es cual tierna primavera;
Y anhelaba siempre ver
A Juanita allí delante.

Mas no crea que estoy loco
Porque digo lo que siento;
Pues mostrélo sin decirlo,
Si no mucho, no muy poco,
Y me dice el sentimiento,
“No haces mal en repetirlo.”

Amistad, y nada más
Yo le pido a
Me responde si es mi amiga
No lo crea por demás.
Pues veo algo de bendita
En la carta de una amiga.

Que sus bienes se acrecienten,
Su salud sea mejor,
Su ideal sublime sea,
Que sus ojos siempre alienten
Y que inspiren lo mejor
En todo hombre que los vea.

Conclusión aquí le doy
A esta carta desabrida,
Y diciéndole, "hija mía,
Ya tú ves cuan triste estoy,
Si apresuras tu partida,
Llegarás á medio día."

UNOS VERSOS

Quiero mandarte unos versos
Y en ellos mostrarte mi historia,
Decirte que tú eres mi gloria,
Decirte que aspiro soñando
Llegar algún día al vergel,
Allí donde tu alma gustando
El nectar, perfume y la miel,
De flores que estás ideando
Sin ser perturbada por Cierzos.

Negra y horrenda es la nube,
Que ronca en su furia, el camino
Guardando, mas yo peregrino
Sin más que la luz de tu pecho,
Veré del arco-iris promesa,
O allí, con el trueno por techo.

Quiero mandarte unas notas,
De aquella canción no olvidada.
Mas gime mi lira enpolvada
Y mi arpa se ahoga en lamentos;
Mi flauta es un puro collozo,
Que llena de angustia los vientos,
Y sienten mis huesos el gozo.

RECUERDOS DE MI MADRE

(1913)

Si poesía yo escribiera,
De mi madre los afectos
Y cariño, el mundo viera
Que hoy en mi ve los defectos.

Sus virtudes volarían
Como tórtolas aladas,
Y los hombres las verían
Ir pasando en parvadas;

Ir volando hacia otro cielo
Aunque nunca se olvidasen
De este insano y sordo suelo
Do el consuelo nunca hallasen.

Mas negóme a mí mi Padre
Esa angélica armonía
Que en el cielo dió á mi madre
Y en la tierra es la poesía.

Y vedóme a mí mi Dios
Que cantase en este suelo,
Y obedezco eterna voz,
A mi Dios, y Dios del cielo.

APOLOGÍA DE UN ÉBRIO

Juramento doy al cielo
Que en la casa de mi abuelo
Me encontré con Don Licor.
Y hasta el día me acompaña,
Ni me insulta, ni me engaña,
Ni se mete con mi honor,
Aunque muchos lo maldicen.

*PARTE DE UNA CARTA

Aquí no comen carne de novillo
Y son sus costumbres tan raras,
Que para todo usan el cuchillo
Y para nada las cucharas.

Yo me he hecho muy comelón,
Y siempre me pongo ahito,
Con un pedazo de jamón,
Y a veces un huevo frito.

O! de papas no te decía,
Pues esas nunca faltan.
Las tengo tres veces al día
Si supieras, ya me hartan.

Escrito como parte de una carta mientras que trabajaba
el autor en un rancho en Waukon, Iowa.

PROFECÍA

Soñarán los hombres sueños
Y al soñarlos soñarán;
Que no siendo sino sueños
Como sueños pasarán.

Soñarán los más ancianos
Y los viejos soñarán;
Que son jóvenes tan sanos
Que jamás se encorvarán.

Las mujeres egoístas
Soñarán en malas horas:
Que ellas son las sufragistas
Y han salido triunfadoras.

Y las pobres campesinas
Se verán de presidentas,
Maldiciendo las cocinas
Y en su engaño muy contentas.

Los pollinos apaleados
Su paciencia mostrarán,
Y los asnos aporreados
Catedráticos serán.

Mas los mozos pasarán
Todo el año enamorando,
Y cuando hombres odiarán
Ver al asno gobernando.

Y las bellas señoritas
Que tejer y cocinar
No sabrán, serán peritas
En el arte de danzar.

¡Verdadera profecía!
Si cumplida tú la vieres
Vivirás hasta ese día
Aunque muerto ya estuvieres.

¿CUANTAS?

Diez por dos
Añade dos
Y bien sabrás
Que línea más
Aquí no la hay.
Una verdad
Relataré,
Pero si no hay
En tí piedad
Me callaré.
Un ciego anciano
Tendió su mano
Callado ruego
Que al pueblo hacía
Durante el día.
Jugarle un juego
Miguel trató.
Fuése y compró
Cohetes trés.
("¡Viejo ya ves!")
Dijo . . . encendió . . .
Y allí cegó.

DOS CORAZONES UNIDOS

Sólo sirvan de modelo
A los que hoy latiendo están
Y demuestren el consuelo
Y hermosura de la unión,
A los que hoy solitos van,
Enlutados, sin canción.

DIOS BENDIGA a R———

Las montañas y riachuelos
Los cañones y pinares
Las estrellas y los cielos,
Los desiertos y los mares,
Y áureo sol de luz bendita,
Todos hoy conmigo digan
¡Dios bendiga a R—————!

*AMERICA

O patria, sólo en tí
La libertad yo ví,
Y doy loor;
El peregrino halló
Consuelo que buscó
Montañas que preció;
¡O dad loor!

Mi padre, con lealtad
Al Dios de libertad,
Supo a abar;
Mi tierra al derredor
Circunda con tu amor
Sé Dios mi protector
¡De todo azar!

Traducción de una parte de "My Country 'Tis of Thee."

